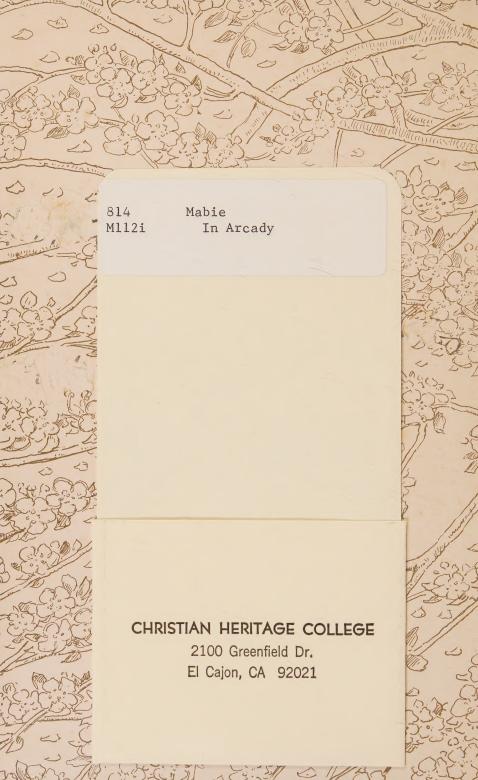
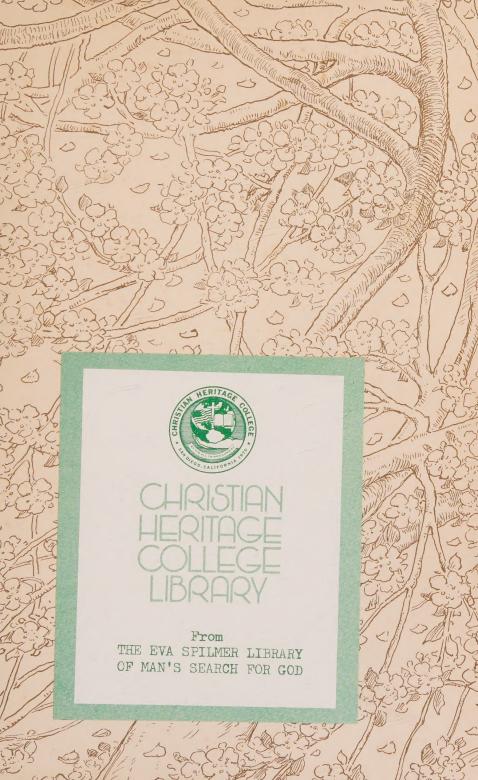
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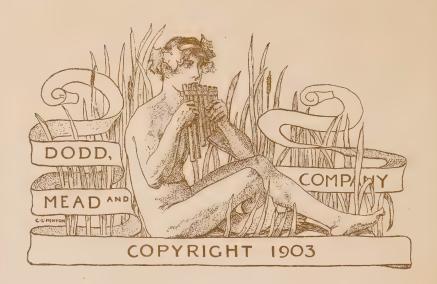
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MY STUDY FIRE, SECOND SERIES
UNDER THE TREES AND ELSEWHERE
SHORT STORIES IN LITERATURE
ESSAYS IN LITERARY INTERPRETATION
ESSAYS ON NATURE AND CULTURE
BOOKS AND CULTURE
ESSAYS ON WORK AND CULTURE
THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT
NORSE STORIES
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
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CHILD OF NATURE
WORKS AND DAYS
PARABLES OF LIFE
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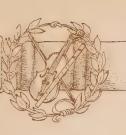






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JAMES LANE ALLEN







STABLE OF CONTENTS

THE	PIPES	OF	THE	FAUI	ν.	•	•	•	•	٠	PAGE 13
THE	LYRE	OF	APOI	LO	• •	٠	•		•	٠	51
THE	SICKL	E 0	F DEI	METE:	R.	٠	٠	•	•	•	85
POST	LUDE						•	•	٠	•	115

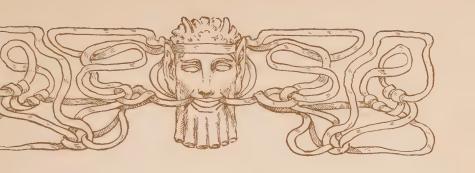




LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILL H.LOW

T he G oddess moving across the fields"	•	Frontis	piec e
The boy raised the pipes to his lips"	٠	. Facing page	40
The Lyre of Apollo $\dots \dots$	•	• 99	54
Without, the stillness of the winter nigh	et"	• 99	124

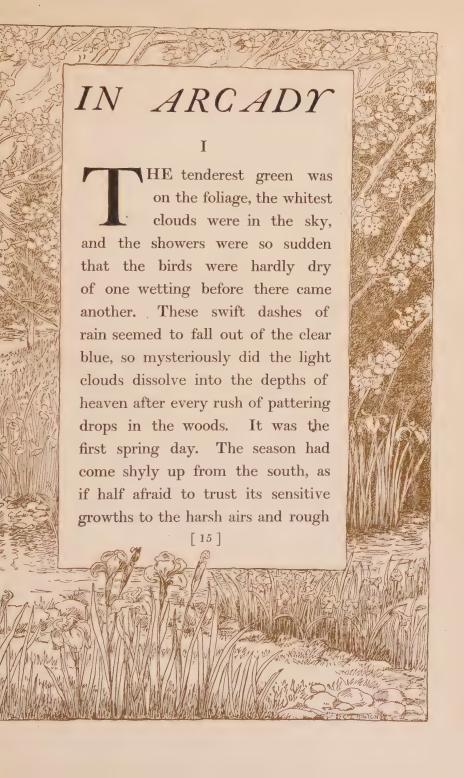


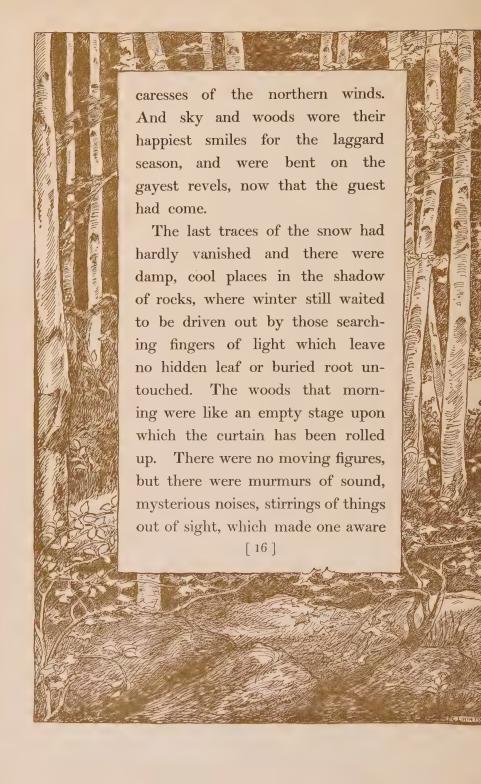


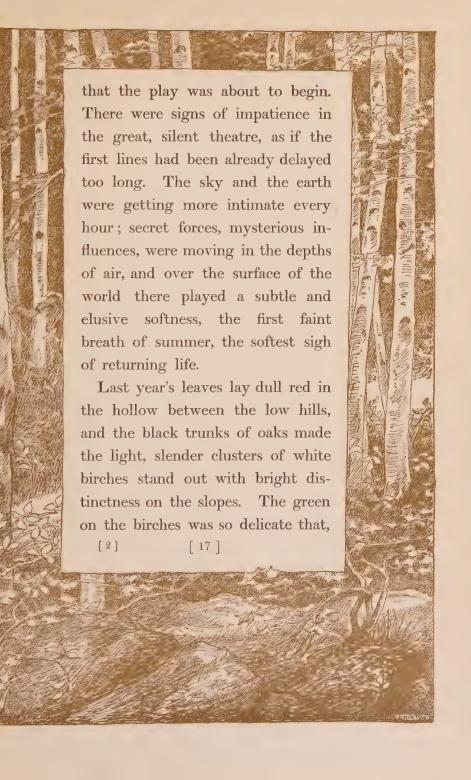
THE PIPES OF THE FAUN

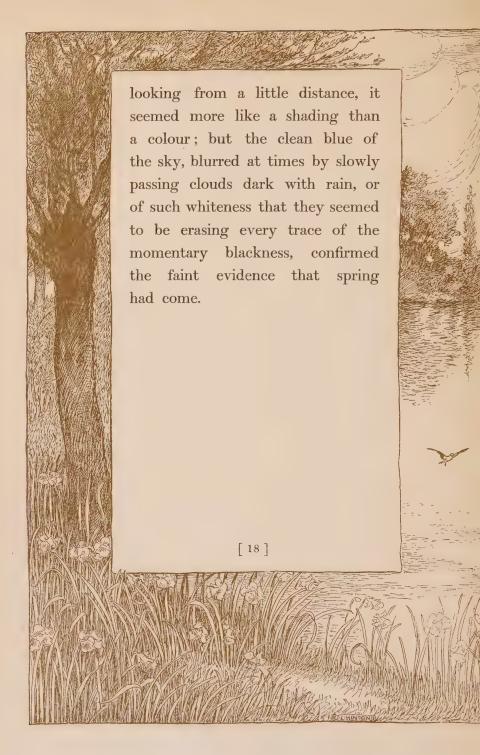
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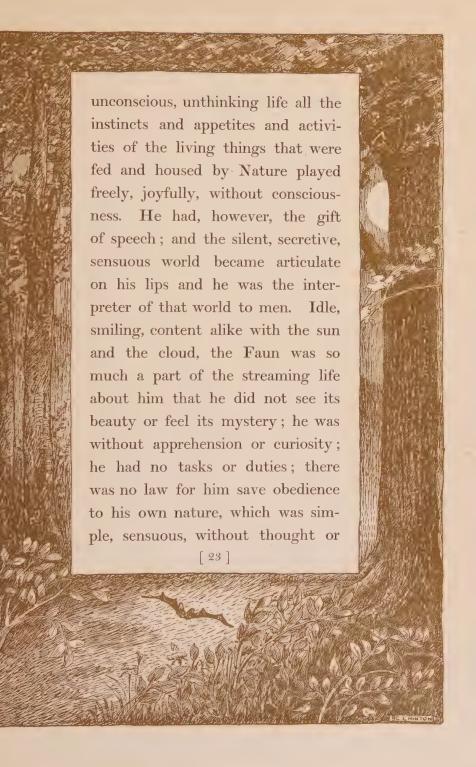
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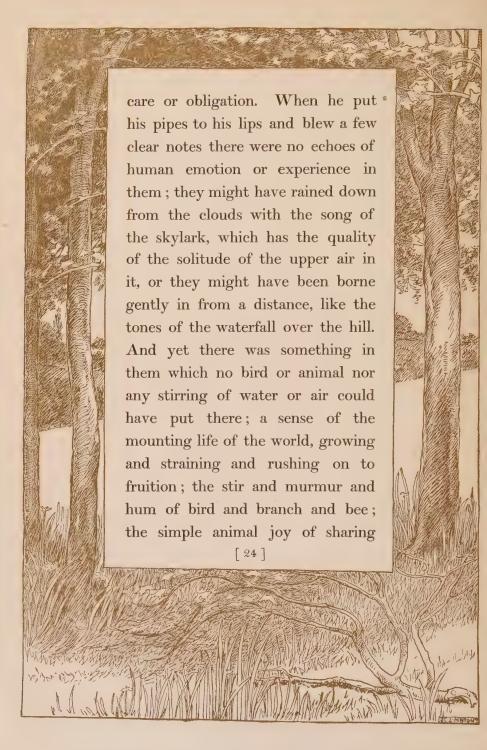
O, at least, thought the Faun, sitting at ease with his back against an oak, his pipe in his hand and his eye wandering curiously through the open spaces of the wood. So entirely at home was he that solitude or society was alike to him, and the speech of men or of animals equally plain. There were hints of wildness about. him: for he was brother to the folk in fur and feather that lived in the wood, although the light in his eye and the pipe in his hand showed that he had travelled far from the old instincts without having lost them. There were hints of human fellowship in his air of seeing the

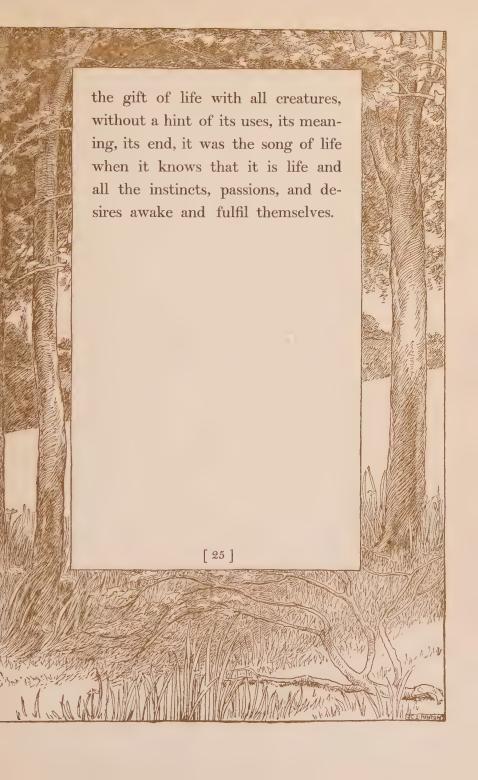
world as well as being a part of it; although the absence of all thought about himself, all questioning of the sky and earth, made one aware that if he held converse with men he talked also with the creatures that slept in the fields and hid in the woods.

He was stretched at ease in a world about which he had never taken thought, being born into it after the manner of the creatures that live in free and joyous use of the things of Nature without any thought of Nature herself. In him, however, the instinctive joy in life had become articulate; he spake for the strange and wild instincts of his kind, although he could not speak of them. In his careless,

[22]











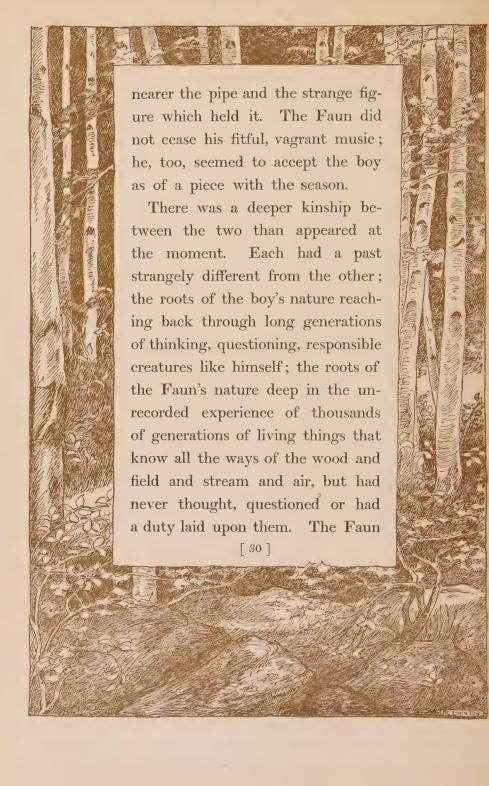
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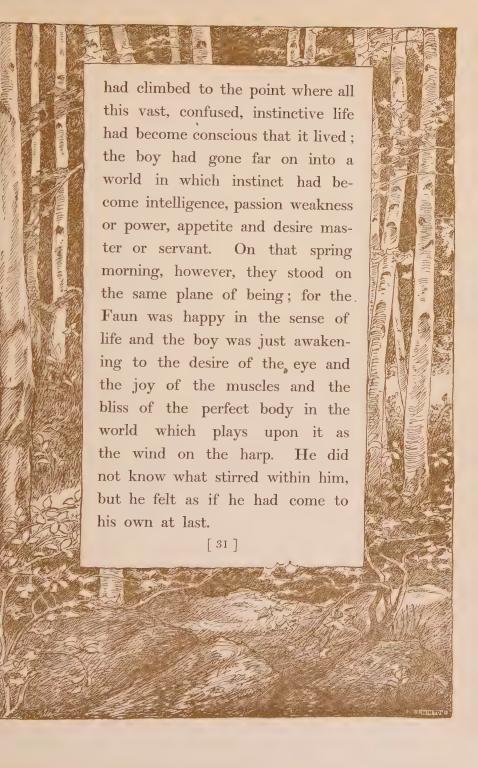




HESE notes, clear, solitary, penetrating, came like an invitation to the boy who had entered the wood without thought or care or desire, save to feel the warmth of the sun and to take what the day offered him. He had never heard such sounds before, but they seemed so much a part of the place and the time that he accepted them as if they were human speech. The Faun himself, visible now through the light growth of the birch trees, brought no surprise; he, too, belonged to the hour and the scene. Instead of shyness a sense of fellowship grew on the boy as he came

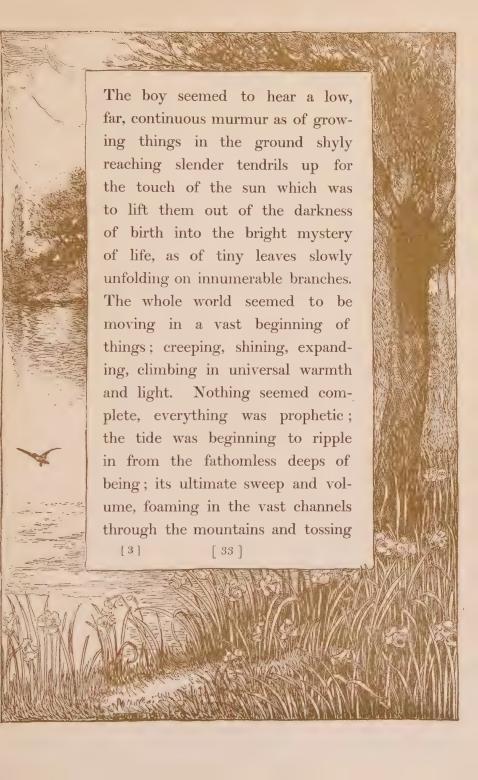
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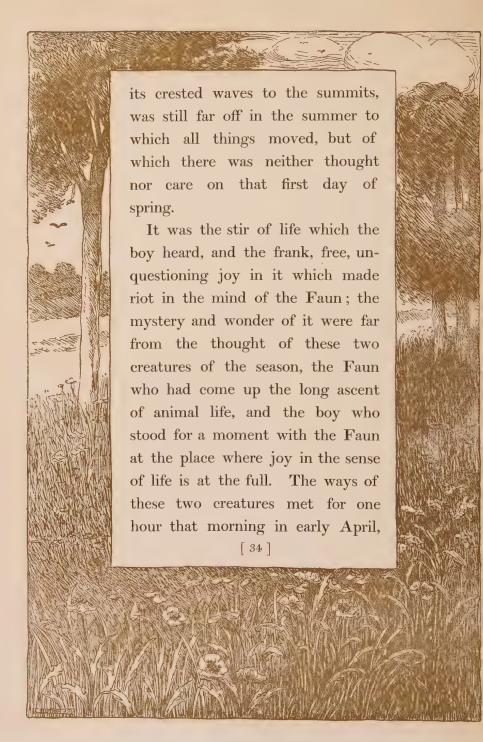


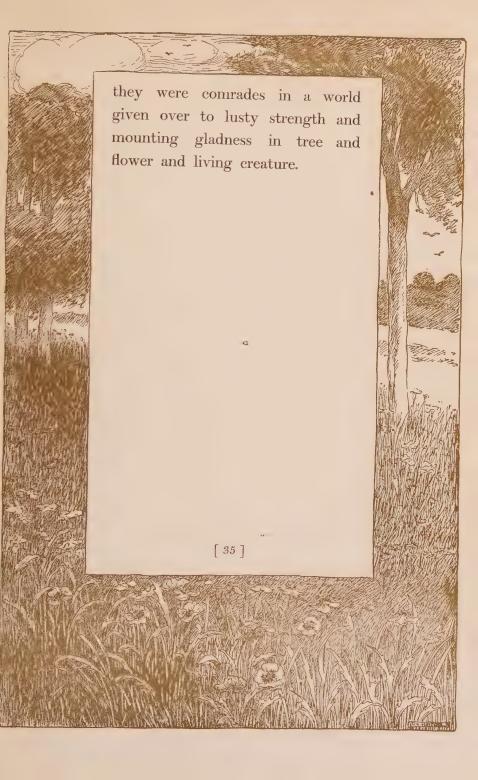


The notes of the pipe floated through the wood and were sent back in echoes from the hillside, with bird-notes intermingled, and the soft murmurs of tree tops gently swayed, and the faint tones of water falling from rock to rock hidden by a press of ferns and softened by mosses. The boy threw himself at the Faun's feet and listened; and as he listened the whole world seemed to come to life about him and move together in sheer delight in the cherishing of the sun and the caressing of the clouds. The woods were full of nesting birds; through the trees delicate patterings of feet were heard, as if the creatures who lived in the coverts and hidden places were abroad without fear.

[32]











IV



IV

****O the merry piping of the Faun the boy laughed gleefully; here was the wild playmate who could take him deeper into the woods than he had ever ventured and show him the shy creatures who were always eluding his eager search. And the Faun, who was nearer his brothers of the wood than his brothers of the thatched roof and the vine trained against the wall, saw in the boy a fellow of his own mind; to whom the wind was a challenge to kindred fleetness and the notes of the birds floating down the mountain side invitations to adventure and action.

[39]

The boy might have been twelve or thirteen: the Faun seemed to be of no age; he had never thought and time had left no trace on his brow or in his eye; he might have been born with Nature, or he might have come with the spring. To-day the boy was his fellow; next spring he would be so far away from him that the sounds of the pipes might never reach him again. Of this gulf to widen between them the Faun knew nothing; it was the kinship of boy with boy that prompted him to hold out the pipes to the sensitive hand which showed the vast divergence of history between the two. The boy raised the pipes to his lips and blew loudly through the rude joint-

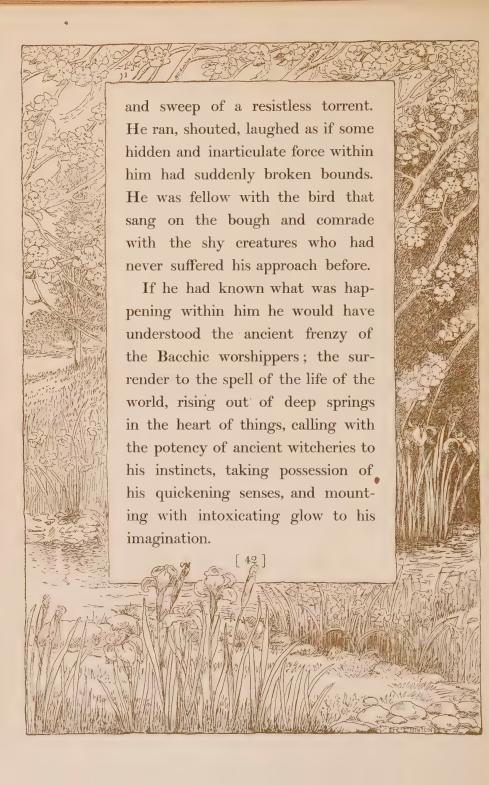
[40]





ure of reeds, and then hung on the far-travelling sounds which he had set loose. There was a strange compelling power in them as they seemed to penetrate further and further into the wood, and seizing the hand of the Faun the two ran together up the wooded hill and over its crest into a world of which the boy had only dreamed before.

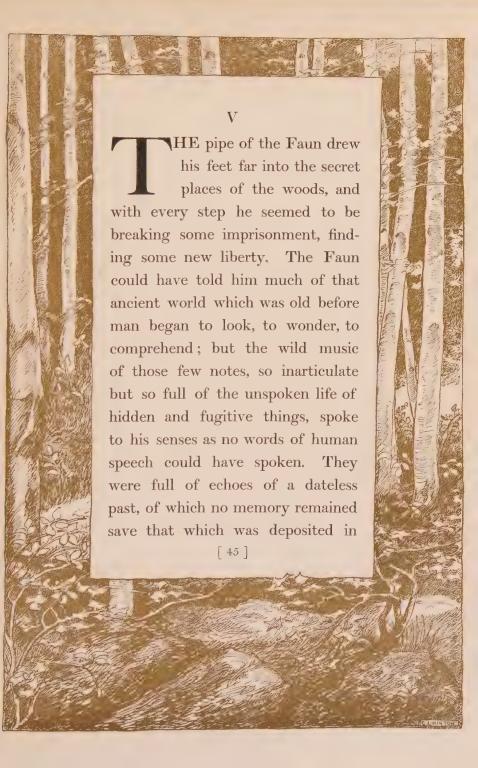
He had seen the world a thousand times before, but now it flowed in upon him through all the channels of his senses; a rushing, singing, tumultuous tide swept him along, and with the jubilant stream the joy of life flooded his mind and heart. A wild exultation seized him, swept him out of himself, and carried him on with the power

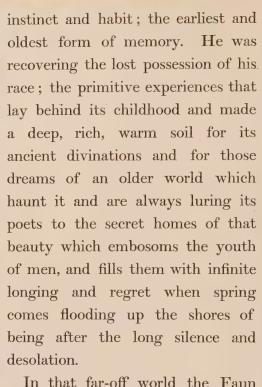




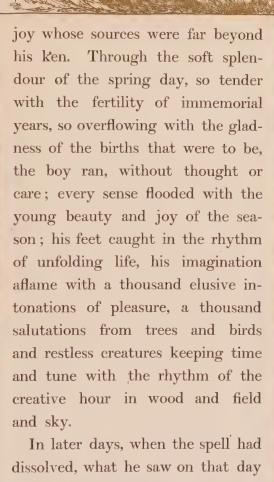
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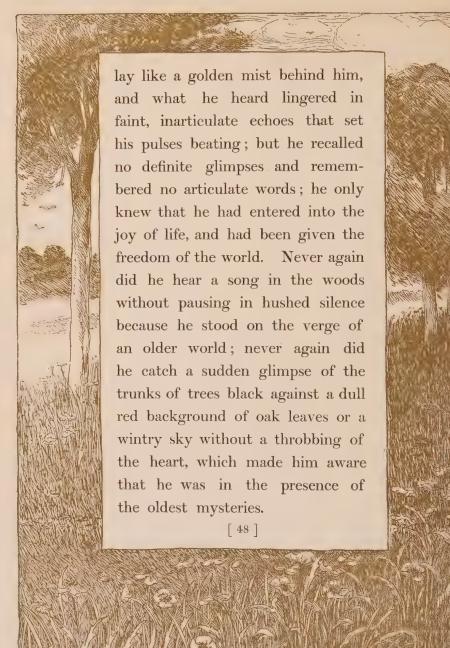


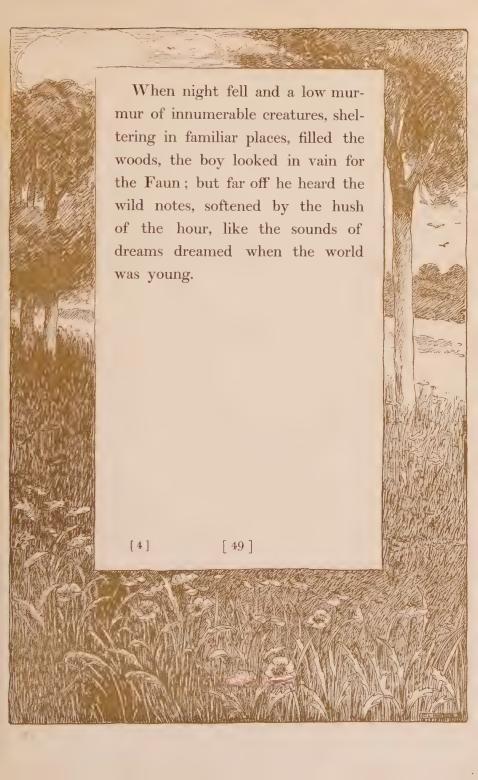




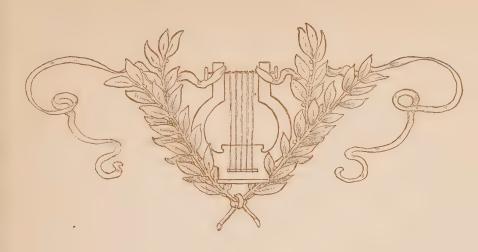
In that far-off world the Faun still lived, and when he blew on the reeds its echoes set the very heart of the boy vibrating with a











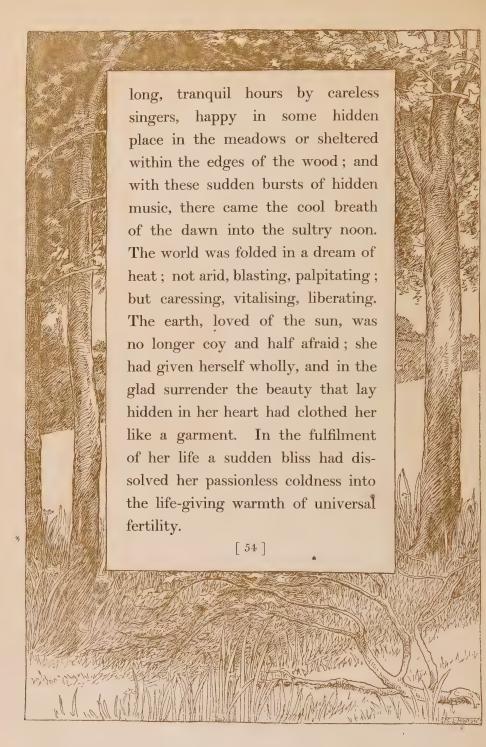
THE LYRE OF APOLLO

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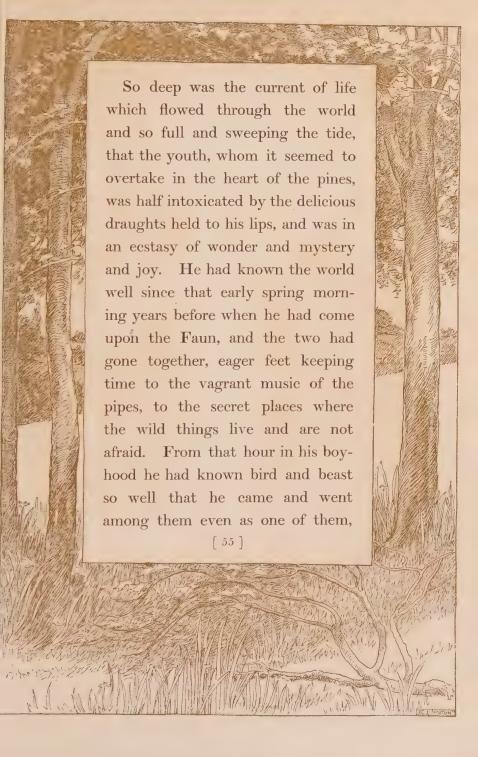
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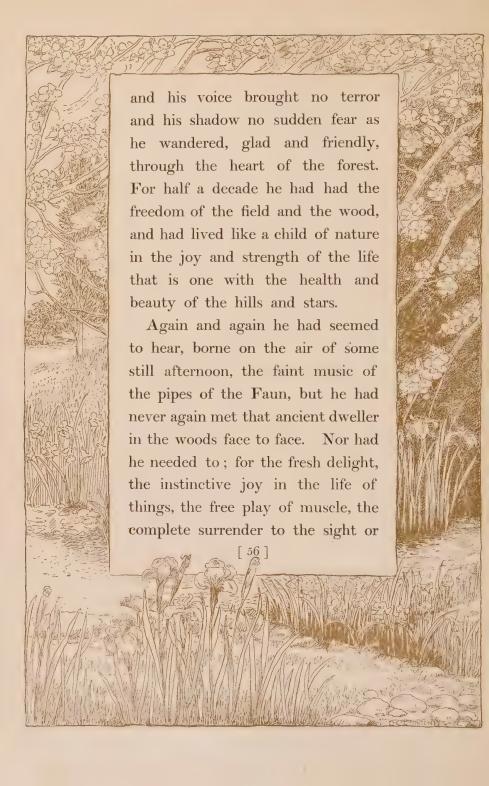
T was mid-June and the world was in flower. The delicate promise of April, when the pipes of the Faun echoed in the depths of woods faintly touched with the tenderest green, was fulfilled in a mass and ripeness of foliage which had parted with none of its freshness, but had become like a sea of moving and whispering greenness. The delicious heat of the early summer evoked a vagrant and elusive fragrance from the young grasses starred with flowers. The morning songs, which made the break of day throb with an ecstasy of melody, were caught up again and again through the

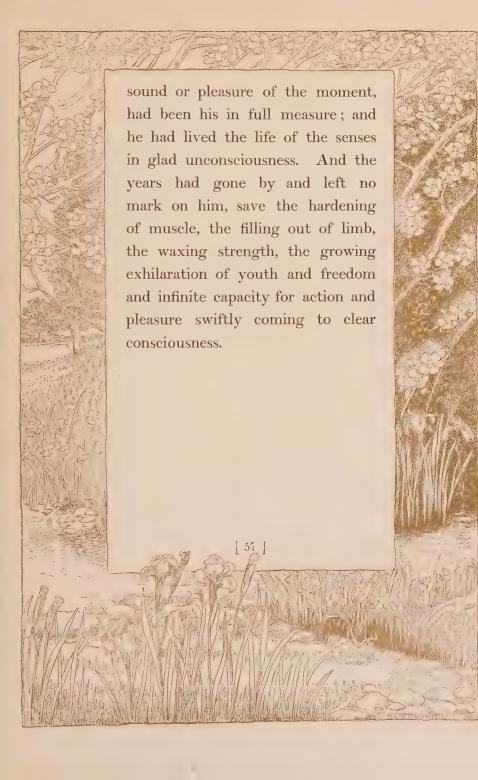




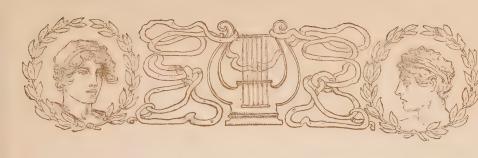






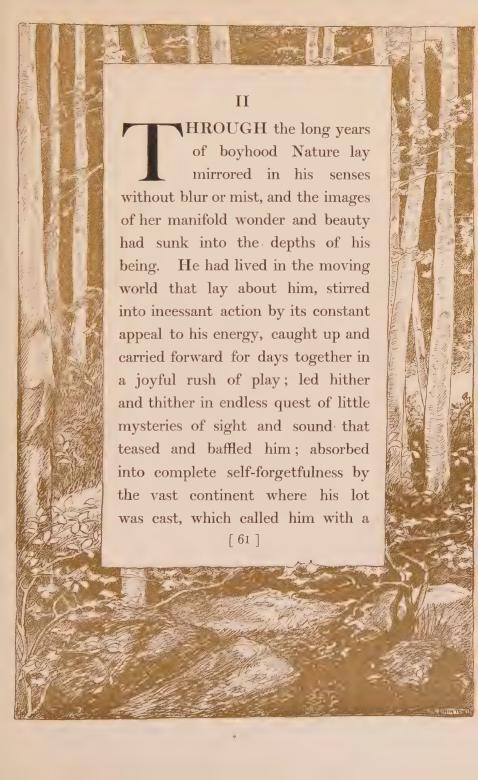


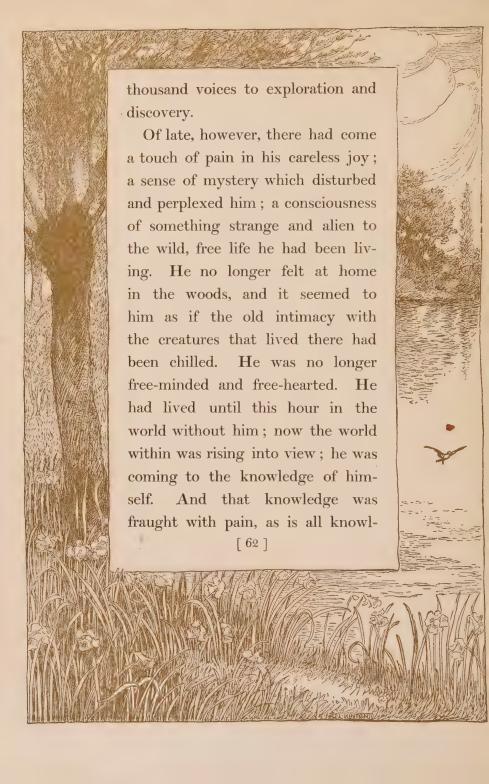


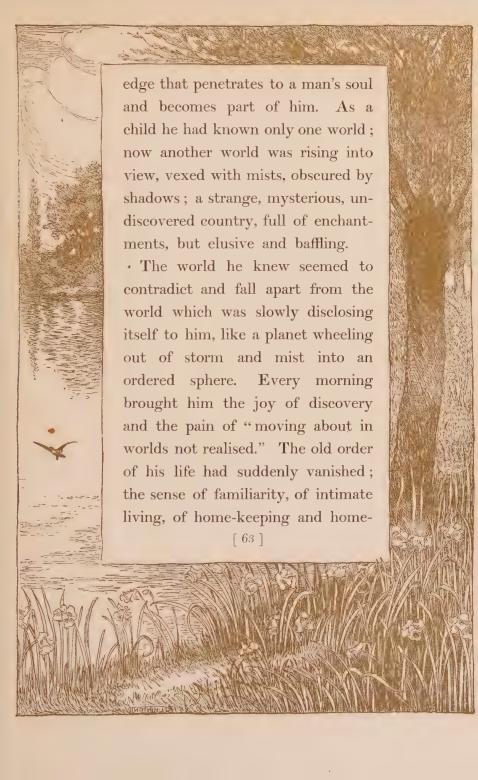


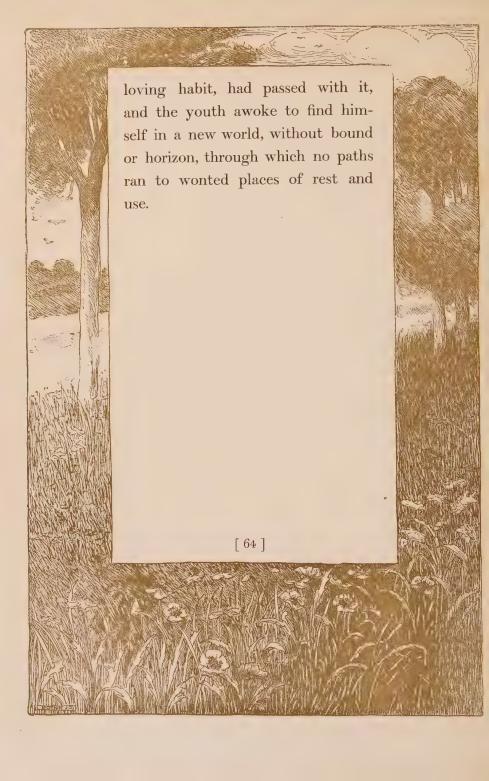
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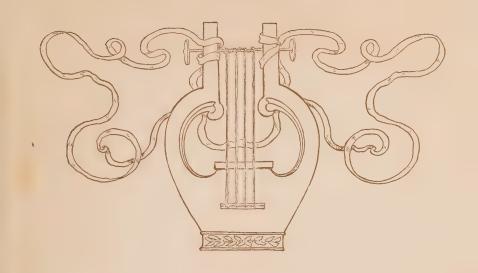












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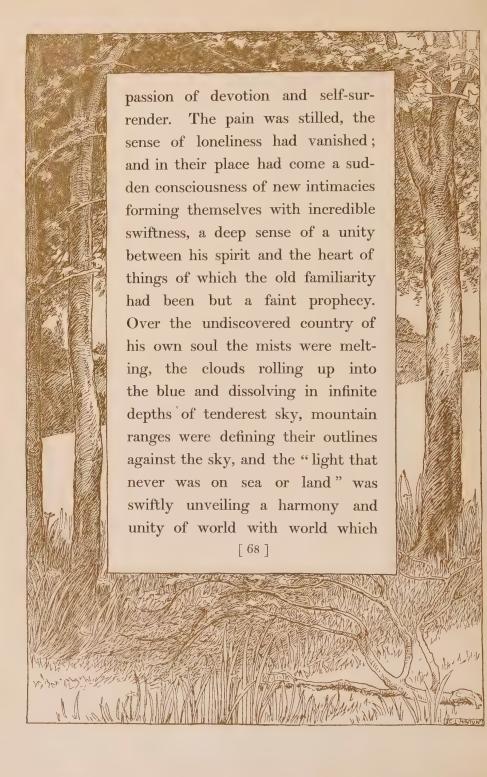




N such a mood, exhilarated and depressed, full of mounting life, but with the touch of pain on his spirit, the youth had found the murmur of the pines soothing and restful; like a cool hand laid on a hot forehead. Again and again, in these confused and perplexing months, he had fled to their silence and shade as to a retreat in the heart of old and dear things.

As he came across the fields on this radiant morning all the springs of joy were once more rising in him; the young summer touched him through every sense, and his soul rushed out to meet her in a

[67]

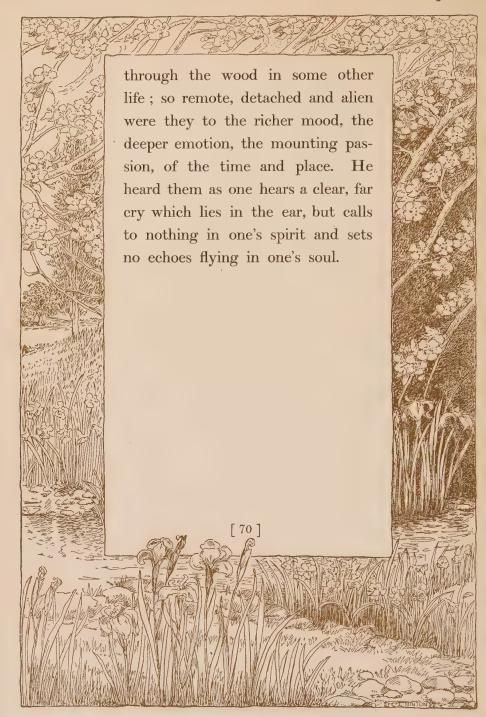


was itself a new and higher beauty than had dawned before on the vision of youth.

The stillness of the summer lav in the heart of the wood, and only the gentle swaying and whispering of the pines, caressed by the lightest of moving airs, made one aware that something stirred in the vast and shining silence of the sky. It seemed to the youth, when he had entered the inner sanctuary of the wood, as if the spirit of things were touching invisible chords so softly that they vibrated almost without sound. He recalled the pipes of the Faun, so clear, piercing, distinct, tuned to the simplest pleasures of the senses, with the feeling that he had heard them echoing

[69]

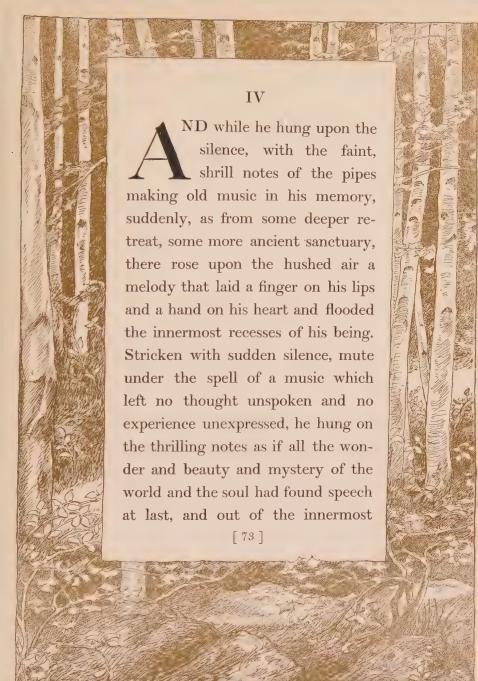


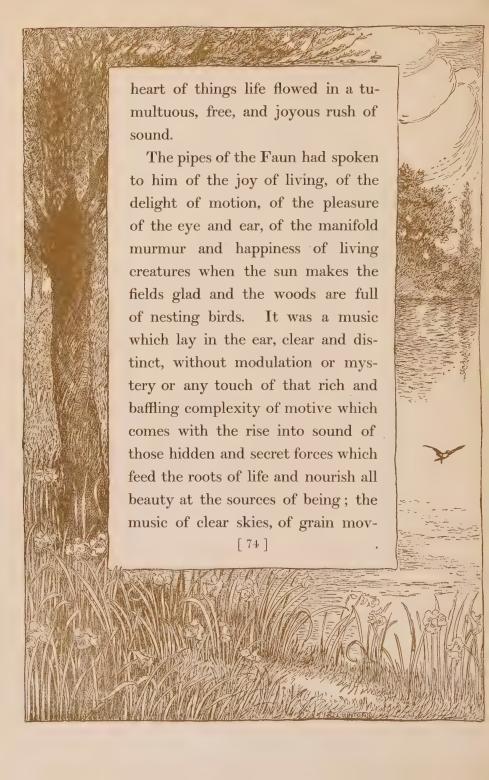


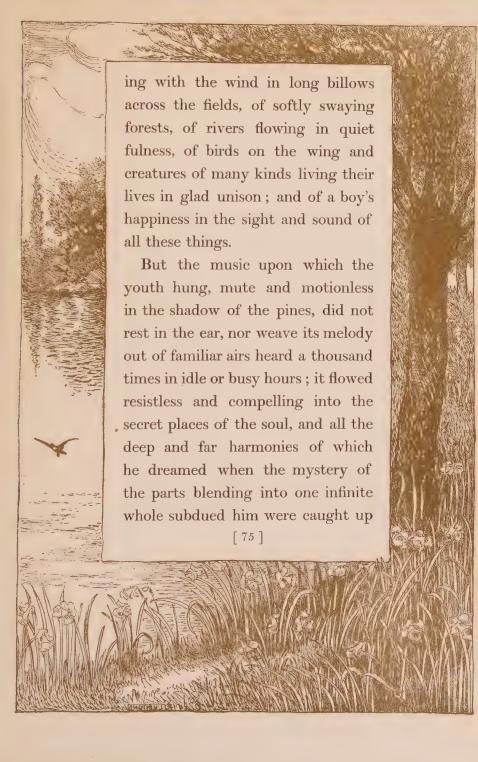


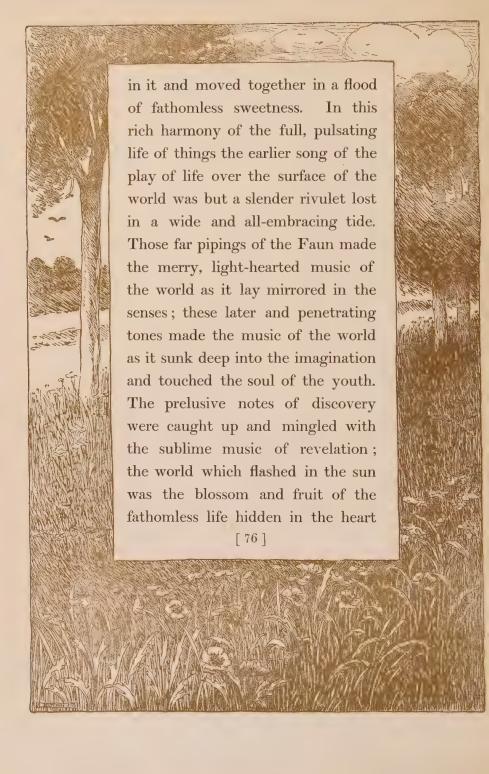
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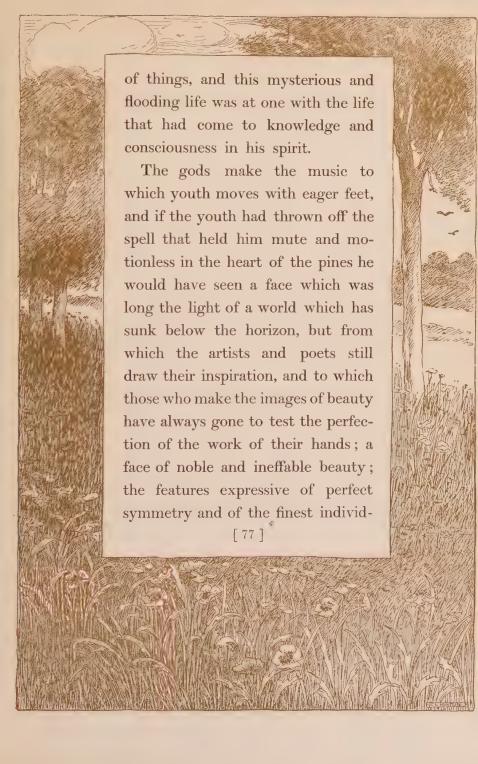


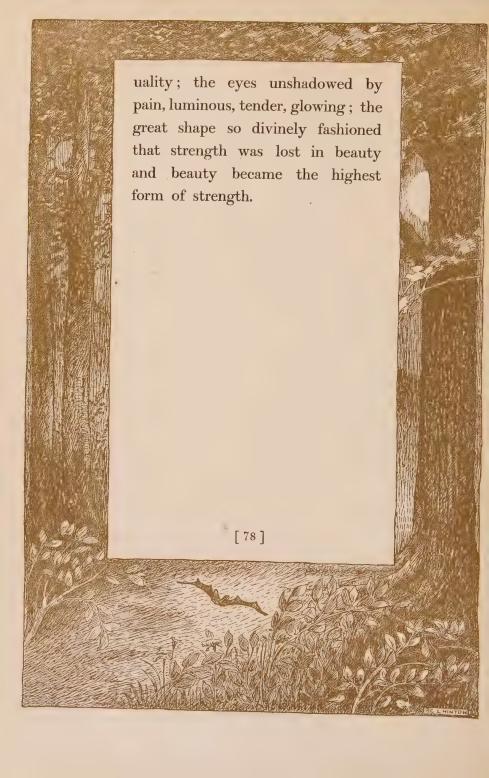










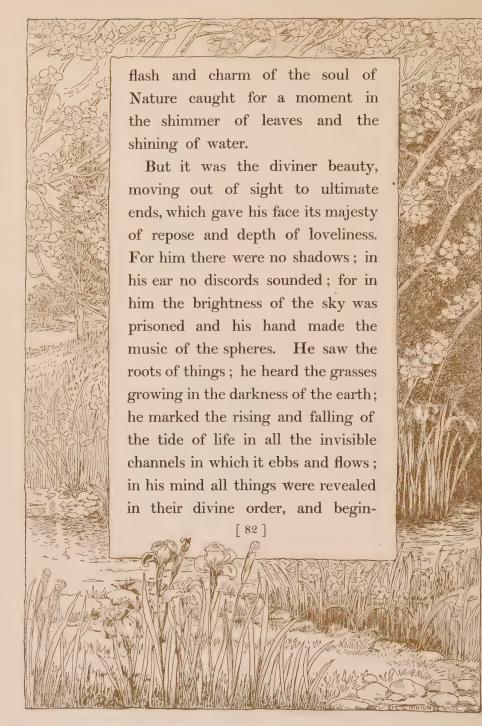


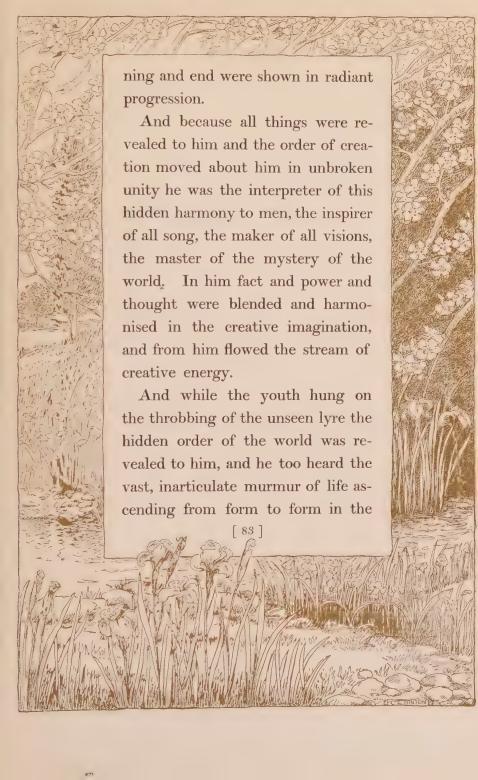


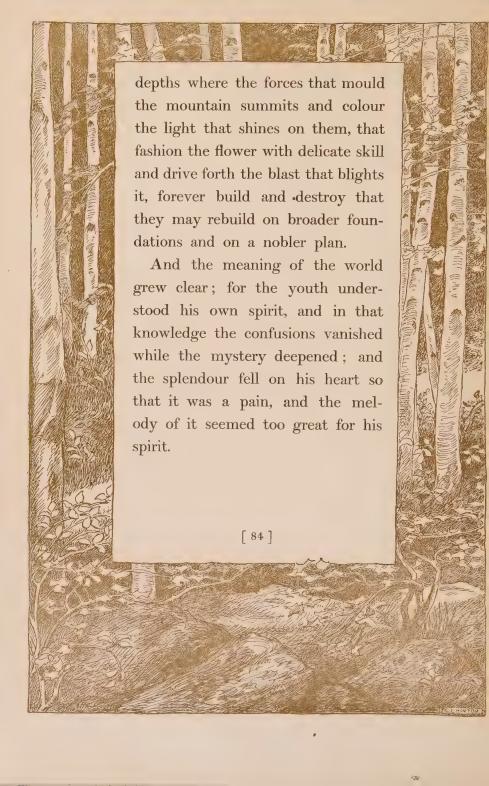
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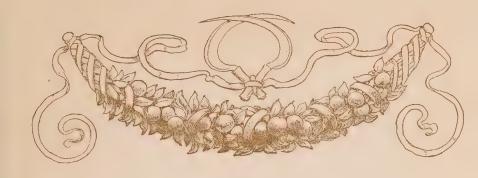


LONG way the god had come and manifold had been his wanderings; but wherever he went the music of high heaven went with him. When he watched the herds in shepherd's guise, the sound of the strings touched by his hand had not only led the flocks, docile and happy, but so filled them with life that they had grown as flocks had never grown before. Healer and protector, bringer of light and health, the splendour of his face was the poetry of the world, the glance of his eye its prophecy, the trembling of the strings at his touch its music. He was the master of all living things and of the [81]







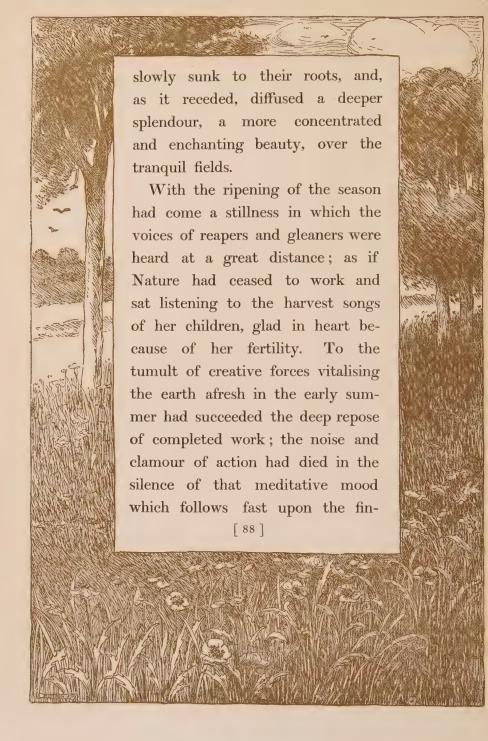


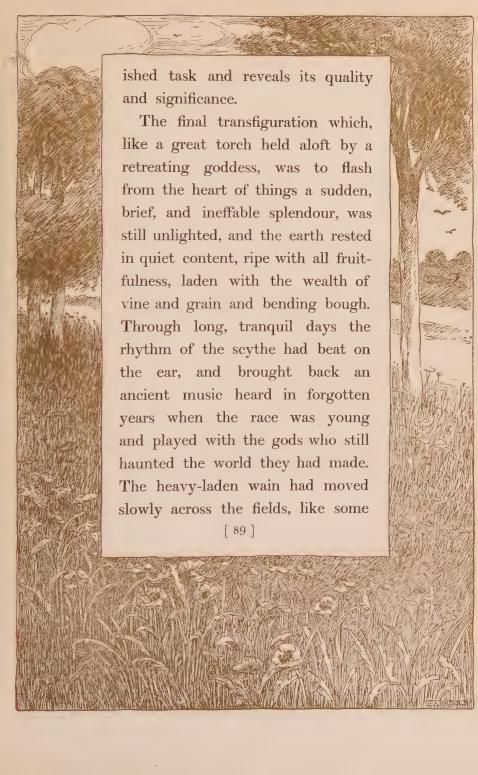
THE SICKLE OF DEMETER

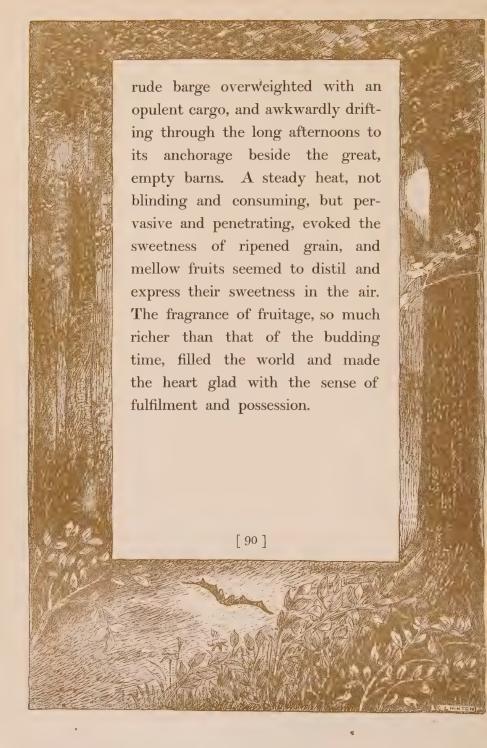
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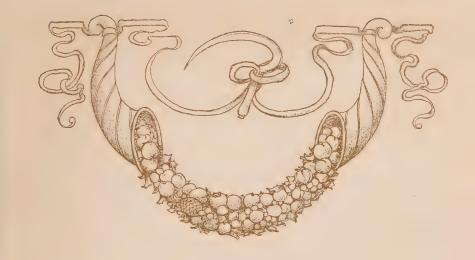


N the great, open world of farspreading fields there was a sense of repose. The tide which had fertilised all things that grow and bloom and bear fruit was beginning to ebb, though there was no sign of vanishing beauty on the face of the landscape. In the riot of midsummer, when the lust of life sometimes rose to a kind of Bacchic fury of delight, there had been no richer bloom of beauty on the surface of Nature than that which lay, half seen and half remembered, on the fields in the ripe autumn afternoon. The rich loveliness that had once spread itself like a soft veil over all things had







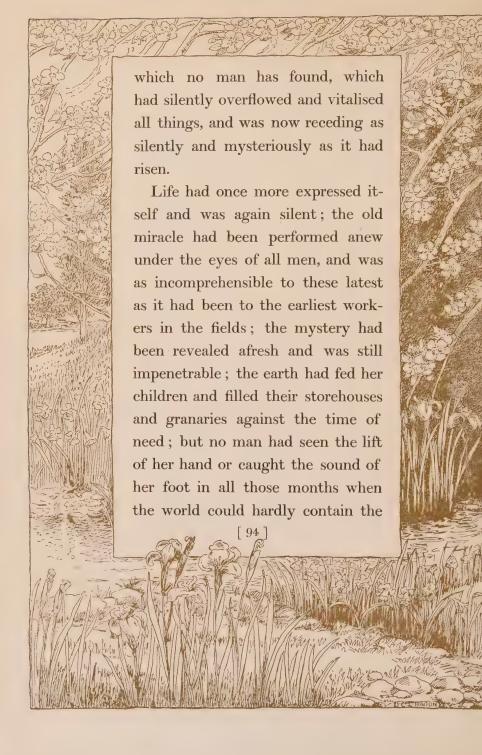


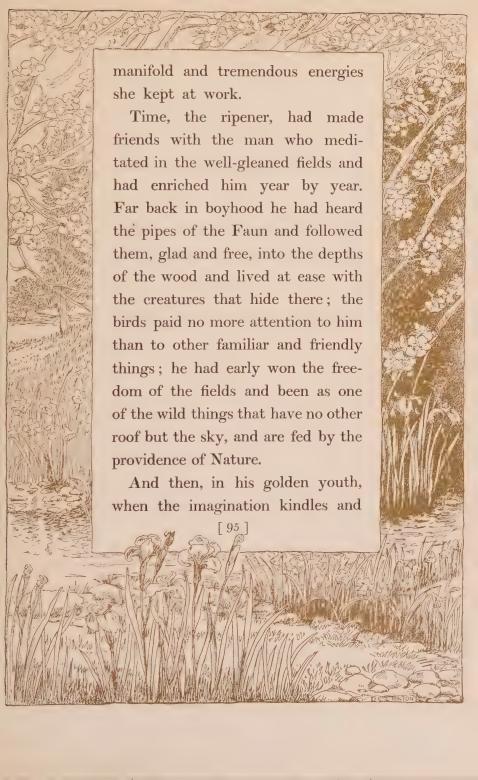
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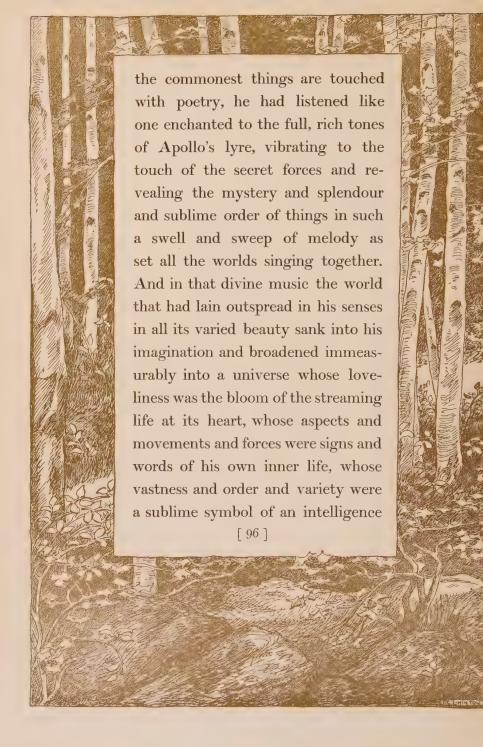


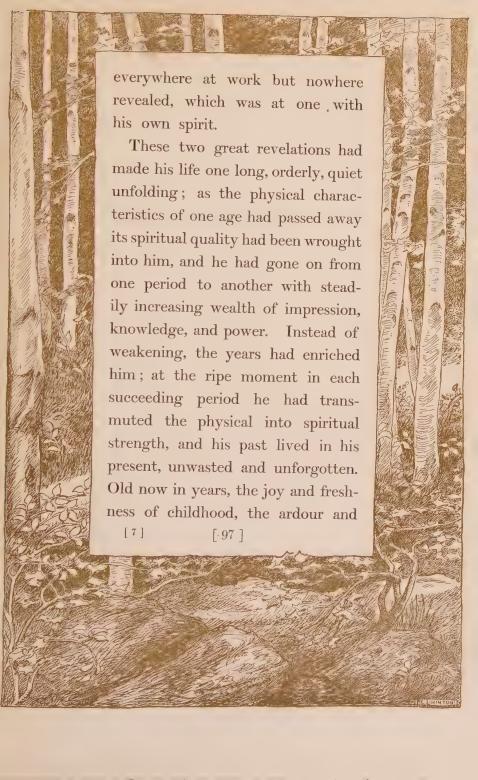
O the man who came slowly across the fields the whole world smelled of the ripened summer; of all the rich juices which had mounted out of the soul in a million million spears and stalks and blades and stems; of all the potencies of form and colour and odour, hidden in the darkness, that had escaped to take shape in innumerable grasses, flowers, and shrubs with a skill surpassing the thought of man, and had breathed into them a sweetness deep as the fathomless purity of Nature; of the mysterious fountain of life at the heart of things, which so many men have sought but

[93]









enthusiasm of youth, the organised and tempered strength of maturity, were his in higher measure and finer quality than he had possessed them before. For him the Faun still piped far afield when the tenderest green was on the trees; for him the far-sounding chords of Apollo's lyre were still struck when the beauty of the summer flooded the world: and now, at the summit of the long ascent of the years, he walked with Nature with quick eye, kindling imagination, and a repose in his heart as deep as that which folded the world in a vast peace.



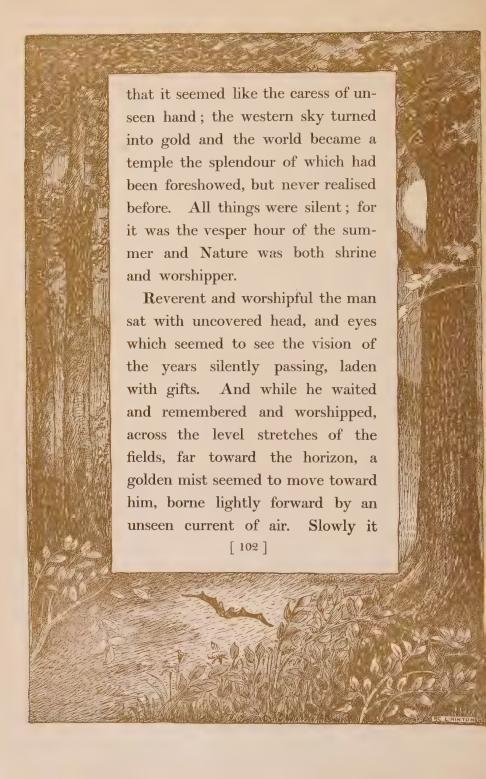
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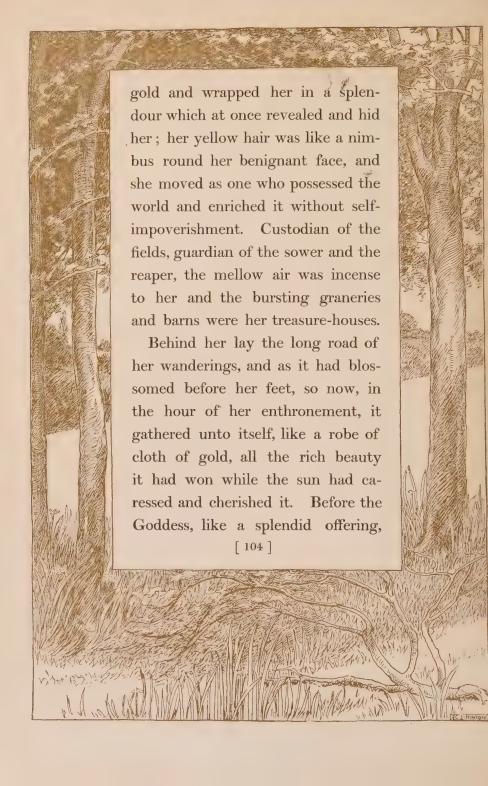


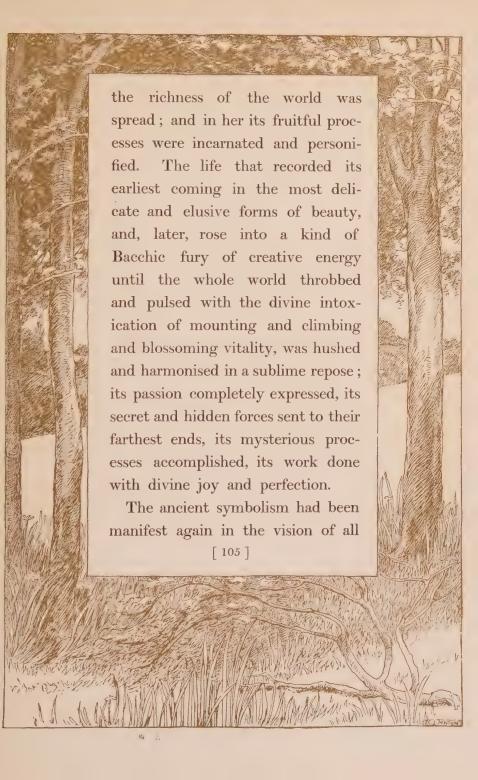
ND for him, as for all who live with Nature, the hour of revelation was not ended; upon the later as upon the earlier years there was to come the breath of the divine. As he walked the stillness seemed to deepen; the voices of reapers and gleaners died into silence; the great barges came to anchorage beside the barns. A hush fell upon the world toward sunset, so akin to that which fills the dim arches and deep aisles of cathedrals that the old man paused, looked thoughtfully over the landscape, and seated himself beside a familiar tree. The air was warm, and moved so gently

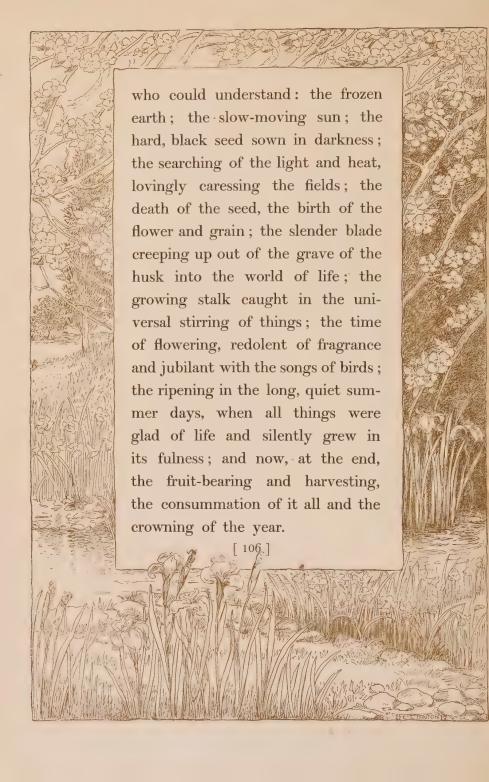
[101]



drew nearer, and as it came the silence deepened and a sudden awe ran through the world. The mist. grew more dense and real, and within it outlines defined and shapes formed themselves, and the heart of the man told him that again the gods were abroad. Faint and far he seemed to hear the clear. shrill notes of the Faun, and nearer and deeper and clearer the music of the lyre breathed through the silence the great song of the creative moment; and then, preluded by the simple melody of childhood and the richer music of youth, the Goddess stood in the fields and he saw her move her divinely moulded arms as if in benediction. The glory of the west shone behind her like burnished [103]



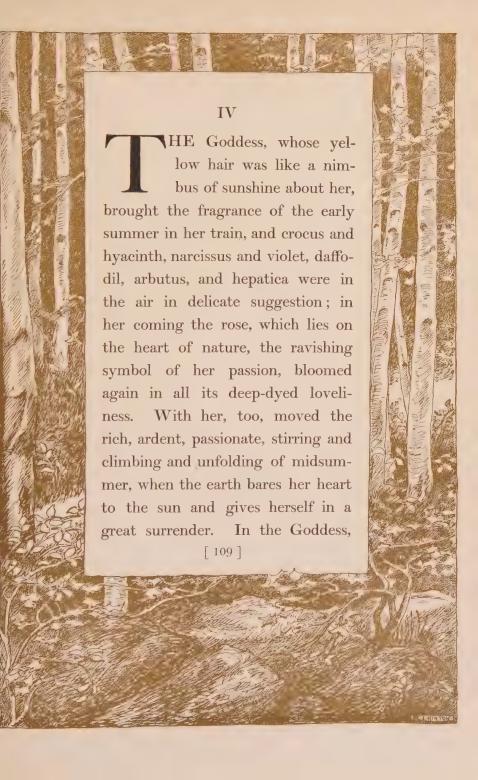




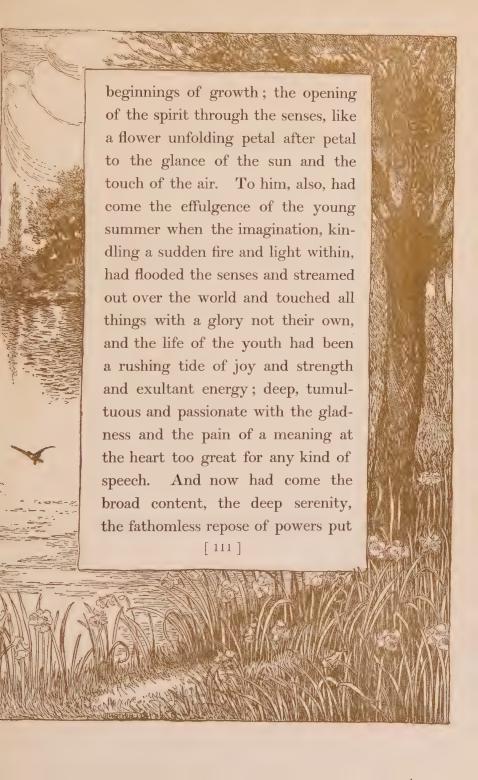


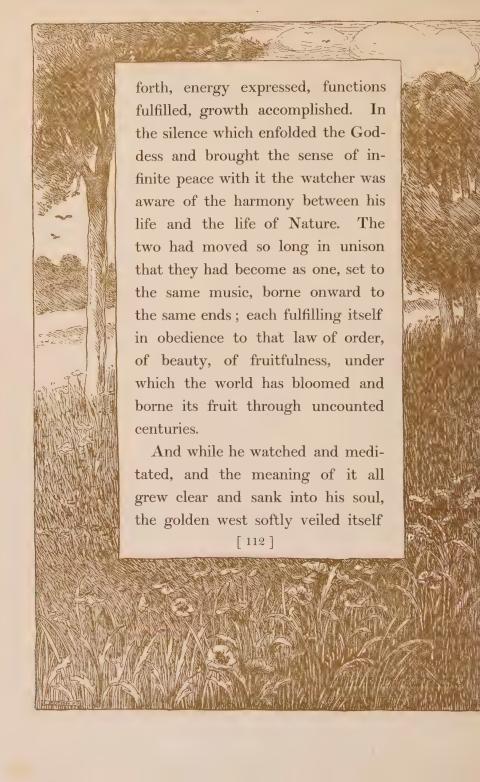
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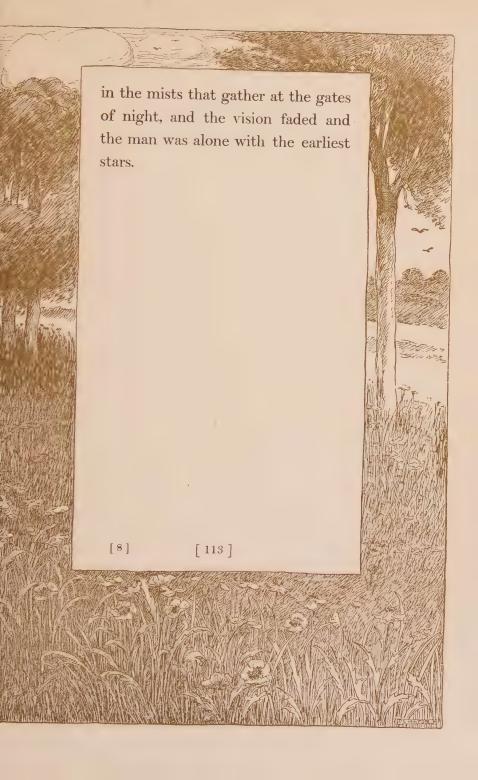
















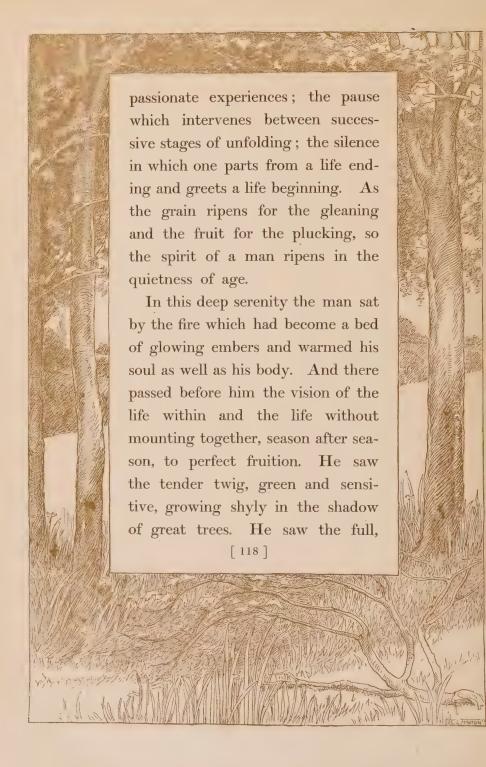
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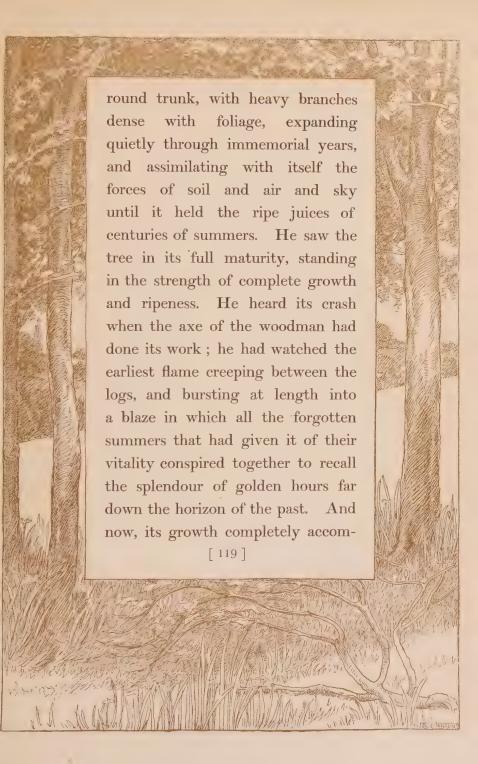
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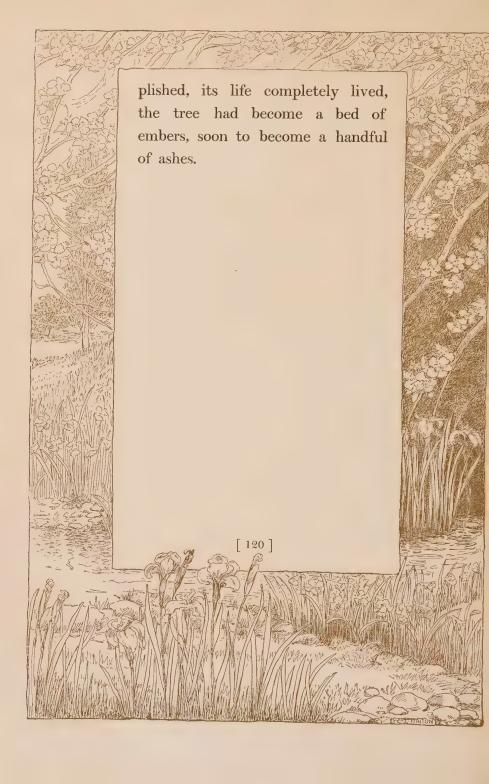


GE had come graciously to the man who sat before the wide hearth. There had been no sudden change, no withering of the affections, no abrupt decline of power; the tide had gone out gently and softly in the hush at the end of the day and left a deep peace behind it. There had been a long ripening, and then a half-realised translation of the physical into spiritual energies; knowledge had deepened into wisdom, and in the cool of the evening there had come that tranquil meditation which distils sweetness out of arduous activities and

[117]



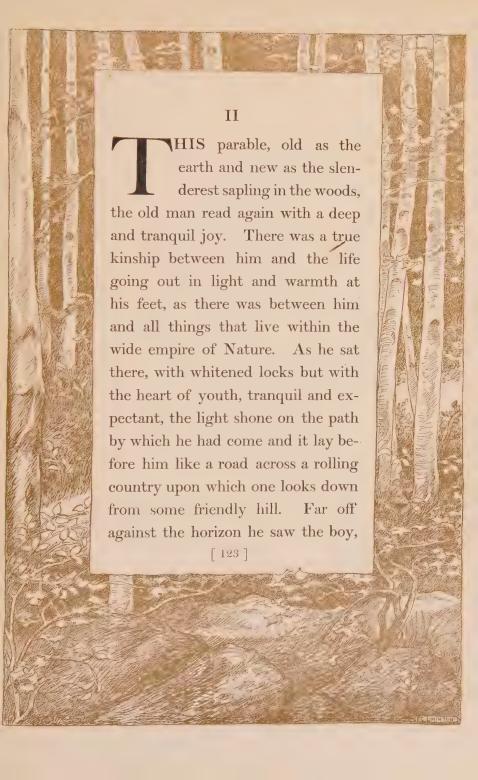






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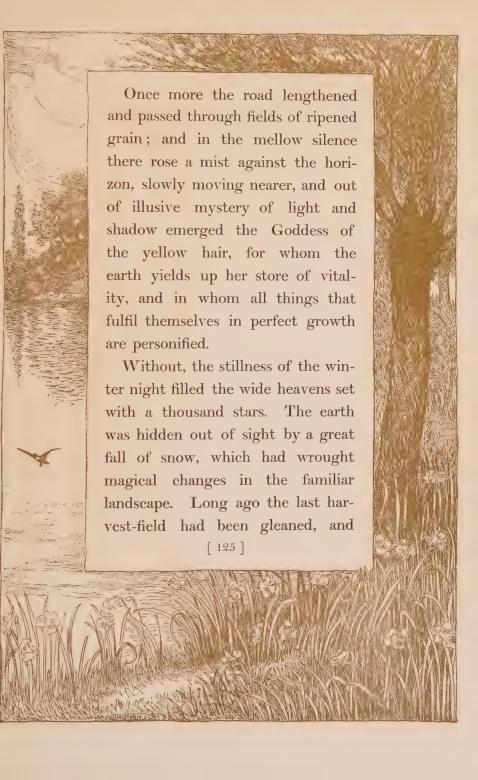
breaking joyfully into the vast playground of childhood, where the mightiest forces sport with children and the most significant and impressive forms become the symbols of their young fancies; and he caught once more the piercing tones of the pipes of the Faun.

And travelling along the road, he overtook the youth, eager, exultant, open-eyed, running with swift feet, his soul kindling into a great flame and the familiar landscape changing into fairyland at the touch of the master magician; and again, as of old, there came the flooding melody, streaming up from the heart of things, which swept from the lyre of the god and ran to the ends of the world.

[124]



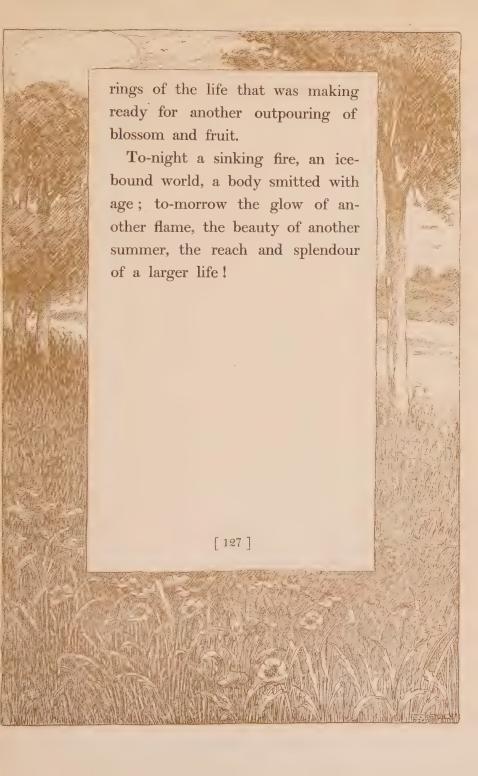




the latest load safely housed in the great barns. The meadows lay cold and sterile in the fierce winds that swept them; and the shining heavens seemed to be infinitely distant from the earth over which they had brooded in the long summer days.

The old man saw the stainless whiteness on the stretches of meadow and the icy glitter of the wintry stars, but there was no shadow on his face. The fields, like the tree, had lived their life to the end and borne their fruit. The glow was fading among the embers, and he overlaid them with ashes; to-morrow another hand would uncover them, and their last lingering vitality would light another fire. Deep under the snow he heard the stir-

[126]











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